

THE BREEZE

Vol. 82, Issue 35

Thursday, February 10, 2005

Today:
Snow showers
High: 39°
Low: 25°

Convicted: Highlawn fails to pay taxes

BY COLLEEN SCHORN
senior writer

Local owners of Highlawn Pavilion were convicted last Wednesday in Rockingham County Circuit Court for failure to pay state sales and city meals taxes.

Brenda and Nick Neofitis were found guilty of embezzlement in Virginia's first felony conviction for failure to pay sales tax. Sentencing is scheduled for April 1 and each could be sentenced to up to 20 years in prison or up to a \$2,500 fine.

The conviction covers crimes committed from January 2002 until March 2004, which totalled \$108,000.

Gene Hart, the attorney for Nick Neofitis, said that his client already has plans to appeal. Hart also said that this was the first time the embezzlement statute had been used in such a case.

"This is certainly a case that will be appealed," Hart said. He said this is a tax case and not an embezzlement issue. Although the Commonwealth proved Highlawn Pavilion, LLC, the company that owns Highlawn Pavilion, failed to pay taxes in a timely manner, Hart said Nick Neofitis has done nothing wrong.

"The Commonwealth allegations were against Nick and Brenda, but it hadn't proved they had taken the money for their personal use," Hart said.

He said Highlawn Pavilion also is owned by LLC, but only the Neofitis were brought to court for the charges.

Since the bar is owned by a "mix of corporation and partnership," according to Hart, Nick Neofitis should not have been brought to court personally.

Hart also said that at the

see TRIAL, page 3



photo illustration by CASEY TEMPLETON/staff photographer

Tri-Beta honors car crash victim

BY MARIA NOSAL
staff writer

The biology honor society Beta Beta Beta will offer a scholarship in honor of a former member who was killed in a car crash in 2001.

Ian Kincheloe was on his way home for Thanksgiving break in 2001 when he was involved in the single-car accident.

"I came across this article in *The Breeze* and found out about Kincheloe," said junior Tri-Beta member Gene Wong, a student senator.

When Wong contacted Kincheloe's family, they promised to match whatever funds Tri-Beta raised.

"When the family found out we were doing fund raising around the same time as his passing, they were in shock and wanted to help," Wong said.

Through T-shirt sales, Tri-Beta raised \$250 and has proposed a bill asking the Student Government Association for \$500 from contingency. If the bill passes in the Student Senate, Tri-Beta will have raised \$750 for the scholarship. The total scholarship will be \$1,500.

"Kincheloe was a model student who exemplified amazing qualities of scholarship for which we should all strive," said sophomore Ashley Lakner, Tri-Beta president. "Tri-Beta would like to honor him, and have an annual scholarship presented to a deserving Tri-Beta member who wishes to further [his/her] education in biology."

Currently, Tri-Beta is working on an application for the scholarship. The Kincheloe family will present the award with Tri-Beta at the induction ceremony in April. The family will be traveling from Mountain Top, Pa.

Cell Watch

House to decide if minors can drive, call

BY STEPHANIE STRAUSS
senior writer

A bill passed in the Virginia Senate last month will prevent teens under the age of 18 from talking on cell phones while driving.

The bill won passage in the Senate with a vote of 32-7, and will now advance to the Virginia House of Delegates.

Teens violating the law will also be ticketed if they do not wear seatbelts, according to the bill.

"We feel that the teen driver with the provisional license and a learner's permit should be dedicated to one single act, and that is the awesome responsibility of driving a car," said the bill's sponsor, Sen. Jay O'Brien, to the Associated Press.

Freshman Emily Nilsen said, "My friend flipped his car while I was on the phone with him and that scared me out of using my cell phone for awhile. I'm not sure that they necessarily need a law completely outlawing it—maybe they should allow kids under 18 to use their phones while driving if

they have a headpiece."

Critics of the bill said it was unreasonable to expect police officers to accurately guess the ages of drivers to identify them as minors.

"I think if they are going to pass a law about not talking on cell phones when driving, then need to apply it to everyone."

— Margot Aaronson
freshman

Sen. William C. Mims said to AP, "In many municipalities, there are curfews at midnight ... and they apply only under age 18 and local police have to make the determination about whether to stop someone when they

look young."

The bill also dictates a curfew from midnight to 4 a.m., except when the minor is responding to an emergency, going to or from work or a school-sponsored activity or driving beside a parent.

"I think if they are going to pass a law about not talking on cell phones when driving, they need to apply it to everyone," freshman Margot Aaronson said. "Maybe people under 18 have more of a chance of causing an accident than someone older, but the risk is still there for someone older too. This is probably a good bill to pass because it will help reduce accidents that could have been prevented."

Other students expressed similar opinions. "This is a good idea; it may decrease the number of accidents," freshman Ashley Alexander said.

Freshman Katie Anderson said, "I have never actually gotten in an accident but I have come dangerously close while I was on a cell phone. I feel it is a little inconvenient, though it is better to be safe than convenient."

SGA lobbies student support with new campaign

Richmond trip successful, members say

BY MARIA NOSAL
SGA reporter

The Student Government Association is beginning a campaign titled "JMU Writes, Virginia Listens," expressing concerns about issues in the General Assembly.

The letter-writing campaign will supplement the legislative visit sixteen students from SGA students took to discuss issues involving higher education to with representatives in Richmond.

The students met with more than 40 legislators and discussed issues showing support of a financial aid security bill, absentee ballot reform, a proposal for \$40 million budget request to buy Rockingham Memorial Hospital and a weapons policy

bill. Students also shared their thoughts on the university charter bill, Student Body President Tom Culligan said.

"It was the most successful trip in at least the past three years," senior senator Beth Rudolph said. "Everyone was received well by the senators, delegates or the aides. It was an enjoyable time and a great educational opportunity for everyone."

The absentee ballot reform bill proposed would allow students to submit requests for absentee ballots online. Having passed committee review, SGA senators are urging students to contact



see BILL, page 3

Senate un-tables Crew Club bill

BY MARIA NOSAL
SGA reporter

The Student Senate approved a motion to un-table a finance bill for Crew Club from October in an effort to earmark a portion of remaining money in the contingency fund.

A motion was made by the chair of the finance committee to un-table the Crew Club finance bill from October. The bill was tabled by the administration because it proposed to build a boathouse off campus, causing issues with legal and personal liability.

By un-tabling the bill, the Senate allowed for money to be set aside from contingency to ensure funds are not allocated to other groups. This motion guaranteed that if the administration approves the bill, the Crew Club will be able to receive the money because there is only a limited amount of contingency left.

"We are concerned that since we had already passed it and they came to us on a first come, first serve basis that contingency would run out before they get their

see SGA, page 3



EVIN SHOAP/staff photographer

The science building's renovations are scheduled to begin in 2006.

Miller Hall to be renovated

BY CLAY GAYNOR
contributing writer

Miller Hall will undergo major renovations beginning next year after the departments currently situated there move to new locations.

"Miller houses chemistry, physics and geology in facilities that are relatively unchanged since their original construction in 1972," said JW Myers, assistant vice president for academic resources. "Building systems, discipline specific equipment and even basic architectural components have substantially exceeded their useful lives."

Win Hunt, director of facilities and construction, said after preliminary work is completed on the building, construction is set to begin in 2006 and will be completed in summer 2008.

David Brakke, dean of the college of math and science, said the physics and chemistry departments will move into the new chemistry and physics building being constructed next to ISAT this summer, with plans to move geology and environmental science to the Modular Building between the fall and spring semesters of the next academic year.

Notes at 'Night'

Senior Janna Saliade of Note-Orlety performs at the Take Back the Night Benefit Concert Tuesday night. All proceeds go to the main event, which is scheduled for March 29.



CAROLYN WALSER/
senior photographer

Alum murder trial selects jury

Opening statements began yesterday in Abingdon for the federal trial of a man convicted of murdering two JMU students in 1996.

Brent Simmons ('96), 32, faces federal charges and, if found guilty, could receive the death penalty. A federal judge in the case said Tuesday hearsay statements made by friends of the victims are admissible. The day prior, jury selection concluded.

Simmons was indicted on federal charges in March on two counts of interstate stalking and using a firearm in the commission of a violent crime.

In 1996, the Commonwealth of Virginia convicted Simmons of two counts of capital murder and two counts of illegal use of a firearm during the commission

of a violent crime. The charges are not considered double jeopardy because state and federal sovereignties are under different jurisdictions.

Simmons was convicted in the murders of his ex-girlfriend, Ann Olson, and her boyfriend, Keith O'Connell. Both were JMU students at the time.

Although no verdict was reached, Simmons agreed to a plea of two capital murders and was sentenced to 20 years in jail for each murder with the sentences running at the same time. Simmons consented to an Alford plea, in which the defendant admits a preponderant amount of evidence exists, but still maintains innocence.

— Colleen Schorn

THE BREEZE

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DUKE DAYS Events Calendar

Thursday, Feb. 10

Delta Chi and Club Gymnastics will hold a date auction in Transitions in Warren Hall from 7 to 10 p.m. Come and buy yourself a dream date.

JMU Libraries is looking for students to help us improve our Web site. We will be paying bookstore bucks (\$10) to participants willing to spend 45 to 60 minutes with us looking at our site and telling us how to improve it. Please e-mail Jody Fagan at faganjc for more information.

Submit your Duke Days of 50 words or less to breeze@jmu.edu

Saturday, Feb. 12

University Recreation will host a 5K Valentine's Run/Walk at 10 a.m. The race begins at the College Center. Race-day registration will begin at the College Center at 9 a.m. All proceeds will benefit PROMotion. For more information e-mail JMU.PROMO@hotmail.com or call 442-4602

Mozaic Dance Club will be having auditions from 2 to 4 p.m. in the main floor of Godwin Hall. The auditions are open to males and females who have an interest in hip-hop-based style of dance. Previous experience is not required. For more information e-mail Travis at mitcheto.

POLICE LOG BY SHARON SCHIFF/ senior writer

Petty Larceny

A JMU student reported the theft of a combination lock and a textbook from a secured locker in ISAT/CS building between Jan. 31 at 11:30 a.m. and Feb. 4 at 8 a.m.

Grand Larceny

A suspect stole a processor and memory stick out of the kiosk located in the hallway of Wilson Hall on Feb. 7 at an unknown time. A JMU student reported the larceny of a jacket, shoes, miscellaneous keys and a JAC card from an unlocked locker in UREC on Feb. 7 between 1 and 3:30 p.m.

Property Damage

A JMU employee reported the glass broken on a display case in Duke Hall between Feb. 5 at 4 p.m. and Feb. 7 at 3:40 a.m. An unknown person damaged the listed building at the Williamson Hughes Pharmacy building Feb. 5 at an unknown time. A JMU student reported damage to a vehicle's windshield wiper parked at Hillside Hall Feb. 5 at 4:38 p.m. A JMU student reported the damage of a window and retention screen at White Hall Feb. 6 at 1:17 a.m.

Assault and Battery

A JMU student reported being assaulted by a non-student in Chesapeake Hall on Feb. 6 at 12:13 a.m. The victim is giving information toward criminal charges. A trespass notice was issued and the suspect was escorted off campus.

Drunk in Public

Wesley J. Kneifer, 19, of Colonial Heights, was charged with drunk in public and underage possession of alcohol on Feb. 4 at 10:16 p.m. at Hillside Hall.

Drug Violation/Alcohol Violation/Possession of Marijuana

A JMU student was charged with drug/alcohol violations in Eagle Hall Feb. 5 at 1:24 a.m. A JMU student was charged with possession of marijuana in Mauck Stadium Feb. 5 at 2:11 a.m. One JMU student was charged with possession of marijuana and alcohol violations and two other JMU students were charged with alcohol violations in Dingledine Hall Feb. 5 at 11:14 p.m. Total parking tickets since Aug. 19: 15,930 Total drunk in public since Aug. 19: 59

MISSION

The Breeze, the student-run newspaper of James Madison University, serves student and faculty readership by reporting news involving the campus and local community. The Breeze strives to be impartial and fair in its reporting and firmly believes in its First

Contact Us

The Breeze is published Monday and Thursday mornings and distributed throughout James Madison University and the local Harrisonburg community. Comments and complaints should be addressed to Alison Fargo, editor.

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- SC8 Pork with Mixed Vegetables
- SC9 Mixed Chinese Vegetables
- SC10 Hunan Vegetables
- SC11 Chicken with Cashew Nuts
- SC12 Kung Pao Chicken
- SC13 Szechuan Chicken
- SC14 Almond Chicken
- SC15 Hunan Beef
- SC16 Pepper Steak
- SC17 Beef with Broccoli
- SC18 Szechuan Beef
- SC19 Jumbo Shrimp with Lobster Sauce
- SC20 Shrimp with Mixed Vegetables
- SC21 Hunan Shrimp
- SC22 Triple Delight
- SC23 General Tso's Chicken
- SC24 Sesame Chicken
- SC25 Four Seasons
- SC26 Pork, Chicken, Beef, or Shrimp Lo Mein
- SC27 Chicken with Vegetables
- SC28 Orange Flavored Chicken

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AROUND CAMPUS

Madison Grill to serve Valentine's Day special

Madison Grill will have a special Valentine's Day dinner menu Feb. 14.

The three-course meal will consist of Mesclun mixed greens with baby mozzarella, tomatoes and peppers, cucumbers and balsamic vinaigrette. The second course will include a Surf and Turf Crab Cake and a New York strip steak topped with béarnaise sauce. Finally, dessert will include a passionberry duo dessert.

The meal will cost \$22.95.

Spring Assessment Day to take place for students

All students with 45 to 70 credit hours must participate in assessment day Tuesday, Feb. 15.

The tests will last for three hours and are required. If a student does not attend, a hold will be placed on his or her fall registration.

The last two digits of the student's JMU identification number determine the time and place of the assessment.

Rooms and times can be found at jmu.edu/assessment/Aday.s05.shtml.

UPB to show free movie sneak peak today

The University Program Board will show "Constantine" at midnight today at Grafton Stovall Theatre.

Free passes can be picked up at the UPB office in Taylor Hall, room 234. Passes do not guarantee admission. Only 600 students will be allowed into the screening.

No bags will be permitted.

Public colleges shift focus to undergraduates as donors

BY SAMIRA JAFARI
Associated Press

Leon Harris pays for his education at the University of Alabama on his own. He's drowning in student loans, he's between jobs and his dorm room just got more expensive.

Yet on a recent afternoon, during a break at the student center, the sophomore sat facing a banner that asked him to donate money to a new student capital campaign. The university wants each of its 21,000 students to give at least

\$2 toward a scholarship.

"I don't have any money to give," said Harris.

Public universities traditionally have not solicited their undergraduates for donations — Alabama hasn't asked since 1922. But faced with state budget cuts and the need to remain competitive, schools across the country are beginning to focus on students as young as freshmen and sophomores as prime targets for fund-raising campaigns.

At California State Polytechnic University at Pomo-

na, undergraduates give to a students-only fund, established in 1998, that's used for scholarships. Several schools, including the University of Georgia, solicit seniors to donate typically \$35 to 50 for the betterment of the campus. At Auburn University, a few colleges within the university are asking students to make contributions in the amount of their class year — \$20.04 for 2004, for example.

The movement isn't surprising since public colleges and universities

have turned their attention to younger and younger alumni over the years, said John Taylor of Durham, N.C., a higher education consultant who specializes in fund raising.

"You typically didn't approach people until a good five years post graduation. That seemed to be rule of thumb," Taylor said. "Now the shift has moved further to talking to seniors before they graduate, so logically that translates to the earlier you contact the student the better."

TRIAL: ABC charges being held

TRIAL, from page 1

time of the trial, the taxes had already been paid.

Bruce Albertson, the lawyer for Brenda Neofitis, said that he had no comment on the case while it was still pending.

Commonwealth prosecutor Phillip Figura could not be reached for comment.

Highlawn Pavilion also is facing charges by from the Virginia Alcohol Beverage Control. According to Whitney Miller, public relations specialist, ABC is proceeding with administrative charges.

However, at this time, the case has not been scheduled for a hearing before an ABC panel, Miller said.

SGA: Senate passes finance bills

SGA, from page 1

approval," senior senator Melissa Laughner said.

The Senate also passed two finance bills to executive staff on Tuesday. Both bills were originally introduced to the Senate Jan. 24 and passed through the finance committee.

The first bill allotted \$150 from contingency to SafeR-

ides to cover the cost of two registration fees for the SafeRides United Conference.

"The money is basically a reimbursement, because we went to the conference last weekend," said junior Meredith Funsten, executive director of SafeRides.

The second bill allocated \$880 from contingency to Intervarsity Christian

Fellowship to pay for a leadership retreat.

"We're going to use the money for a retreat directly after school," senior Joey Lawni said.

A motion was made to amend Senate rules, adding in a rule stating recorded votes must be posted on the SGA Web site nine school days after the vote.

BILL: SGA lobbies for JMU

BILL, from page 1

their legislators to support the bill.

The financial aid security legislation forces the General Assembly to keep unmet financial need at 35 percent. This bill also passed through committees.

Culligan said the proposal, submitted by the governor, calling for funds for the purchase of RMH is proceeding through the legislature.

Members of the SGA feel the

trip was successful, although a JMU-supported bill proposing to allow universities to make their own weapons policy was not discussed by legislators.

Since the major bills have been discussed, the SGA is moving beyond lobbying.

"We are now moving into the next phase, which is the follow-up," Rudolph said. "Our follow-up is writing letters to legislators."



Ryan Waters
IDLS
senior



Kristin Sandberg
IDLS
senior



David Kim
history
junior



Mandy
Johnson
psychology
freshman

CAMPUS SPOTLIGHT

What was your favorite Super Bowl commercial and why?

ISABEL PERRY/contributing photographer

"I thought the monkey commercial was pure genius. I mean, come on, monkeys dressed as humans? That's breaking new ground."

"The Budweiser Clydesdale commercial when all the farm animals tried to be horses! That pig at the end with the fur around his ankles had me rolling!"

"My favorite Super Bowl commercial was the one with all the airmen and soldiers walking through the airport while everyone was applauding them."

"I liked the Pepsi commercial because I liked P. Diddy driving a Diet Pepsi truck and Carson Daly pimping it out at the end in his truck."

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OPINION

THE BREEZE | www.thebreeze.org

THURSDAY, FEB. 10, 2005 | 4

TO TALK OF MANY THINGS

Iraqi election a success

JONATHAN KELLY
contributing writer

"Smile heaven upon this fair conjunction, that long have frowned upon their enemy! What traitor hears me and says not amen?"

So spoke Henry, Earl of Richmond, in Shakespeare's "Richard III" at the prospect of ending England's bloody civil war between the royal houses of York and Lancaster. The recent election in Iraq provides reason for similar mirth, having demonstrated the iron will of people who desire the freedom to shape their own destiny. After years of vile, despotic rule and constant dangers of sectarian war among ethnic groups, an astonishing number of Iraqis braved all hazards to cast votes for a better future.

The Washington Post reported on Jan. 31 that millions of Iraqis turned out for the event on Jan. 30, the first free election in Iraq in a half-century. The endeavor was not without peril; terrorist insurgents opposed to the democratic process threatened violence against those who went to vote. At least 44 people were reported killed in suicide bombings, shootings and mortar rocket attacks. However, the insurgents were less powerful than originally feared, and countless Iraqi citizens defied their malice to exercise the right to vote. Jubilant festivities took place in many Iraqi cities

see VOTE, page 5

BREEZE PERSPECTIVES

Don't drop the D-hall trays

COURTNEY MYERS
contributing writer

The age of puberty, pimples and saliva-filled kisses has come to an end. College marks the dawn of a new era, promising volumes of knowledge, inspiring professors and lifelong friendships. Balancing Aristotle and pie charts with the "freshman 15" and an endless supply of red Solo cups is a time-management act mastered during "the freshman experience." What the energetic staff of JMU's Summer Orientation program failed to relate to their new peers was the underlying theme of the freshman year — the sheer awkwardness of life. The best example of this terrible awkwardness that pervades throughout every aspect of one's first year is the D-hall dining experience.

Where is the best place to meet before lunch at D-hall? I have found the most popular meeting place is inside or outside the entrance way leading up those terribly steep D-hall stairs. What does a meeting time mean to the mass of impatient people? Would a hunger-

stricken human take the chance of meeting their friend inside the vast circus of D-hall?

If your "friend" does decide to leave the foyer and meet you inside of the zoo, what are the chances of finding each other? Do you search in hunger amongst the sea of tables for your friend? Or should you get food and navigate slowly through backpacks and blondes painstakingly balancing that hellish black tray. Assuming, that is, you can find a table to eat at without asking the awkward, "Are you going to be done eating soon? Can I put my stuff down?" Be sure to bring a book or copy of The Breeze with you so that while you are eating alone you look studious — not stupid.

Waiting in line for grilled cheese takes long enough, and there is absolutely no time left to talk to the nice purple-shirted boy who sat behind you in last semester's calculus class. Unfortunately, the overeager young man has all the time in the world to ask you a list of questions. The monotony has led me to sug-

gest that JMU's bookstore makes T-shirts saying, "My break was great, and I'm sure yours was, too." This boy doesn't compare to the dreaded encounter with the recent drunken hook-up. Horror spreads throughout the body as the "Mike Ashby NJ" you know from your cell phone asks, "How was your weekend?" while standing in the salad line. Or, what if Mike doesn't say anything at all and the two bodies that recently were entangled during a lusty stupor stand next to each other in absolute silence? Suddenly, the realization hits — you don't want salad.

The most embarrassing D-hall dining experience occurs when balancing a tray becomes too much to handle. The awareness of one's own nakedness in a sea of a gaping audience will forever be associated with the sound of a tray and its contents crashing to the ground. You must love the conveyor belt, for it is the final resting place of these dreaded devil trays.

Courtney Myers is a sophomore English major who doesn't carry a tray.

HOUSE EDITORIAL



House bill dials right number

Samantha, age 21, is driving down Interstate 81, chatting on the cell phone with her mom. Cruise control is set at the speed limit, 65 miles per hour. All of her stickers are updated. Samantha only has one thing against her — she looks young.

Soon, Samantha sees a pair of red and blue flashing lights behind her. She pulls over. When the officer approaches her window, she says to him, "Officer, why have you pulled me over? I am not violating any laws." The officer replies, "You look like you're 17 years old, and it's illegal for you to be that young and talk on the cell phone while driving."

When Samantha hands over her driver's license and registration, the officer realizes he made a big mistake. Samantha is 21.

While this scenario is just hypothetical, it could happen if the Virginia House of Delegates goes along with two senators, James K. O'Brien, Jr., R-Fairfax and William C. Mims, R-Loudoun, who just succeeded in passing a bill in the state Senate that would bar drivers under the age of 18 from using cell phones while operating vehicles.

The bill itself is understand-

able, and it should be well supported. Young drivers, who are also more than likely avid cell phone users, are more susceptible to distractions because of fewer years of driving experience.

But here's the catch with O'Brien and Mims — the senators are also trying to get this no-cell-phone-under-18 bill passed as a primary — rather than secondary — offense. That means that police officers can look in someone's car, guess their age and pull them over. Officers already do that if a driver looks under age 16 and is driving without a parent, but something about the proposed law just doesn't seem quite right.

It is unfair to give police officers the ability to judge the ages of cell phone users, but we have a solution for them. Change the law to ban all individuals, despite their ages, from using cell phones while driving. Yes, we believe younger drivers are more dangerous on the road, but that doesn't mean older drivers aren't dangerous. It's important that this law is made a primary offense. Officers no longer will have to judge ages; they just have to see someone talking on a cell phone.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Scholarship reallocations victimize winning teams

It strikes me as odd how in the article "Athletics reallocates scholarships," in the Feb. 7 issue, cutting athletic scholarships was justified by calling them "participatory sports."

It went on to explain the scholarships were cut from these teams because the athletes on these teams did not seek extreme competition, but were content with simply participating on the team. Did JMU Athletics get these facts from the mouths of the athletes? Or did they surmise this by interpreting their endless toil and nationally recognized accomplishments as a sign of apathy toward competition?

The fact is, at the time the reallocations began, the teams that were deprived of the funds that fueled their excellence were the teams achieving the most. Men's cross country was conference champion in '98 and '99. Men's swimming and diving won conference titles in '99, '00, and '01. Women's swimming and diving won in '01. And wrestling was CAA champ in '99 and '00. Not one of these sports — then among the school's elite teams — has won a conference championship since the cuts began in '01.

If JMU Athletics is going to dump all the scholarships into popular sports to seek name recognition, they should have the integrity to admit it. Downplaying the competitive nature of less popular sports to explain the decision is condescending and insulting to the athletes. Show some respect to the athletes who now represent you for free.

Teddy Stevenson
sophomore, English

Anti-abortion column appreciated

I want to thank Jon Anderson for his very well-written article on abortion in the Jan. 31 issue. I thought he captured the value of unborn lives and the equally important care that needs to be given to the mothers. It was extremely pleasant to find that there seem to be more anti-abortionists in the 'Burge than I expected. Thanks again for getting the word out.

Mary Alice Kent
sophomore, psychology

Editorial policies

Responses to all articles and opinions published in The Breeze are welcome and encouraged. Letters should be no longer than 250 words, must include a phone number for verification and can be e-mailed to breezepinion@hotmail.com or mailed to MSC 6805, G1, Anthony-Seeger Hall, Harrisonburg, VA 22807. The Breeze reserves the right to edit all submissions for length or grammatical style.

The house editorial reflects the opinion of the editorial board as a whole, and is not necessarily the opinion of any individual staff member of The Breeze.

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VOTE: Iraqi democracy cause for hope

VOTE, from page 4

as the citizens celebrated their new ability to determine how they would be governed.

The breathtaking courage required of Iraqis to play their role in evolving their country to modernity is an inspiring commentary on the human spirit. When given the opportunity, human beings are capable of opposing the most intimidating odds to achieve a flowering of goodness. The Iraqi people chose to stand up to the forces of malevolence and work toward an outcome in which they could achieve liberty, peace and happiness. By all accounts, the effort they made to vote was a victory for them and for the world.

But this episode should not trick anyone into a sense of false optimism. The endeavor to produce an effective form of government that is pluralistic and respectful of the rule of law is only

beginning. The leaders who were selected by the Iraqi voters need to choose a three-person Presidential Council by a two-thirds vote, and then they must write a national constitution outlining elections for new leaders. The coalition of leaders representing the Shiites, Sunnis and Kurds will have to prove that they can work in concert by respecting the majority's right to govern and the minority's right to not have its liberties trampled on by the majority.

To prevent a tyrannical majority from abusing the rights of the minority, the new assembly is arranged based on proportional representation, which means that any party with just 1/275 of the vote will get one of the 275 seats in the assembly. Finally, the new government will have to demonstrate that it can provide Iraqis with basic necessities such as security, water and electricity, or else it will have little support.

Therefore, one should not be overconfident about the future of Iraq, but one should be hopeful.

The challenges ahead for Iraqi self-government are formidable, just as it was a daunting task for our founding fathers to design a government that would hold the United States together as one nation. Still, the Iraqis have shown that they have the will and the courage to take up the labors of representative government. With help from the United States and others they may still succeed in bringing forth a civil society.

Human beings are capable of accomplishing astounding feats with the power of their minds and consciences, and Iraqis have looked into their nightmarish past and cried out, "Enough!" Meanwhile, the rest of the freedom-loving world responds wholeheartedly, "Amen."

Jonathan Kelly is a senior political science major.

DARTS & Pats

E-mail darts and pats to breezedp@hotmail.com. Darts & Pats are submitted anonymously and printed on a space-available basis. Submissions are based upon one person's opinion of a given situation, person or event and do not necessarily reflect the truth.

A "there-should-be-more-brothers-like-you" pat to the guy waiting outside of D-hall to have dinner with his little sister Monday night.
From a sophomore that wishes her older brother could do the same thing.

A "thanks-for-being-a-jerk" dart to the guy who threw chicken at us and caused us to get arrested on Saturday night.

From an angry sophomore who had a hard time explaining the situation to policeman.

A "way-to-have-no-heart" dart to my wealthy neighbor who said that having a handicapped child would be a terrible thing because they cost too much money and are no fun.

From your senior neighbor who is shocked and appalled that you would say such a thing.

A "you're-too-cool-for-school" pat to the "badass" who gave himself a pat in the last issue of The Breeze.
From a sophomore who had to read it twice just to make sure that he was reading it correctly.

A "thanks-for-the-reminder" dart to the Hoover vacuum who left my upper body bruised from a long night at his place.

From a junior girl who will be wearing turtle-necks to class for the next two weeks.

A "you-are-so-disgusting" dart to the guy in my GAMST class who kept sticking his hands down his pants to adjust himself.

From a shocked classmate who still can't believe you would have the audacity to do that. Next time excuse yourself from class or I will call you out and throw hand sanitizer at you.

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Eligibility Requirements

Qualified applicants must be graduating college seniors or enrolled as degree candidates in a graduate or professional school. Applicants must be enrolled in a Virginia college or university or must be a Virginia resident if enrolled in an out-of-state institution. They must also have a demonstrated commitment to excellence in academics, proven leadership ability, and involvement in extracurricular activities and community service. The selection of Fellows will be based solely on merit, without regard to race, sex, national origin, religion, age, disability, or political affiliation.

Length of Program

Fellows will be required to work full-time in Virginia state government. The 2005 Governor's Fellows Program will begin Monday, June 6, 2005 and continue through Friday, July 29, 2005.

Assignments

Participants are placed in different positions in the Governor's Office and in various agencies throughout the Executive Branch. The program attempts to match Fellows with compatible assignments according to background, interests and future goals.

Funding

State funds are not allocated for the Governor's Fellows Program. However, in previous years, colleges and universities have distributed stipends to the Fellows selected from their institutions. Institutions are urged to make summer grants available. Applicants who will require financial assistance in order to participate in the program should discuss this matter with school officials before applying.

Office of the Senior Vice President for Student Affairs and University Planning 568-3685.

Application

The deadline for applying for the Summer 2005 Fellows Program is
5 p.m. February 25, 2005.

For application and additional information please see this website:
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SPORTS

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THURSDAY, FEB. 10, 2005 | 7

Dukes look for big win against Hofstra

BY JAMES IRWIN
sports editor

JMU wraps up its season series with Hofstra University Friday when it hosts the Pride at the Convocation Center.

The Dukes, coming off a 56-52 victory over the George Mason University Patriots Sunday, enter the game 12-8 overall and 5-6 in the Colonial Athletic Association. Hofstra comes in at 11-9 and 6-5.

"It think it's a big game for various reasons," JMU coach Kenny Brooks said. "One, it's the next game and you take things one game at a time. It also helps position us for the conference tournament."

With seven games left on their regular season schedule, the Dukes are in fifth place in the CAA, one spot behind the Pride. JMU has been plagued by inconsistency as of late. After winning seven in a row early in the season, the Dukes are 5-7 since Dec. 29.

Still, Brooks said his team isn't too far from the conference elite.

"If you look at it, we're not far off," Brooks said. "We've had stretches in games where were very good and then lulls where we can't hit shots. I don't think we're very far."

Brooks has a point — the Dukes have gone into overtime twice this season, losing both games. Five of JMU's games this season have been decided by two points or less.

One of those games was a 55-54 loss at the hands of the Pride Jan. 20 in Hempstead, N.Y.

"They're one game up on us," Brooks said. "We felt like we let one slip away up there, so it's a bit of a redemption game."

In letting things slip away, the Dukes allowed Hofstra center Vanessa Gidden her then-fourth double-double of the season. Gidden finished with a game-high 21 points and 11 rebounds.

"She was huge," Brooks said of Gidden. "She came down and dominated us."

So did the flu bug, which limited sophomore forward Meredith Alexis to two points and four rebounds that night. Alexis played eight minutes. Brooks said having her healthy will play a factor Friday.

"It will be a little different," Brooks said. "We have to be physical and keep Gidden away from the basket. She's effective in the low

see PRIDE, page 8

BASEBALL PREVIEW 2005

ACES HIGH

Leatherwood, Risser anchor pitching staff

Story by staff writer Todd Bagchi

JMU senior right-handed pitcher Brian Leatherwood knows the drill. Being a senior comes with added responsibility, especially since he is the only senior leading the Dukes' young pitching staff.

"I know when I was younger, I looked up to the older guys, and they paved the way for me," Leatherwood said. "I don't feel any added pressure, but at the same time, I'm comfortable with the role."

Coach Spanky McFarland also feels comfortable designating Leatherwood as a leader. For the second consecutive year, McFarland named Leatherwood a team captain. This season, McFarland said his expectations have grown.

"I'm not necessarily looking to him for [leadership], but I expect him to be better at it," McFarland said.

Last season, Leatherwood was the team's workhouse, leading the team with 14 starts, while going 7-5 with a 7.73 earned run average.

Among the other pitchers McFarland will be relying on this season is junior left-handed pitcher Greg Nesbitt. Last season, a line drive to the face halfway through the season kept Nesbitt from pitching as often as he might have. This year, Nesbitt just wants to move forward with his career.

"To be honest the injury wasn't really that big of a deal," Nesbitt said. "I just want to build on last year and continue to take strides in my career."

When he did pitch last year, Nesbitt led the Dukes' starters with a 4.55 ERA. McFarland is excited about the prospect of having a healthy Nesbitt back in the team's rotation this season.

"Nesbitt's the wild card in our rotation," McFarland said. "He's been hurt but when he's healthy he's our best pitcher."

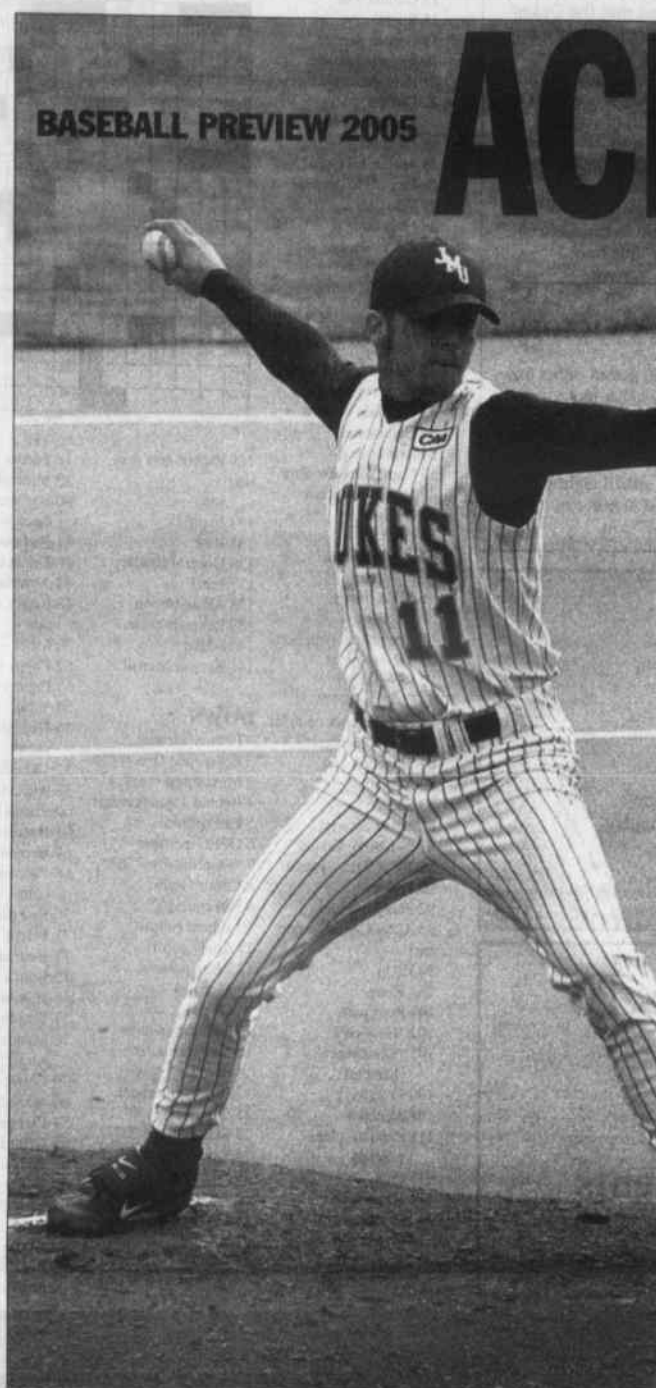
Two pitchers that actually benefited from Nesbitt's injury were sophomore left-handed pitcher Jacob Cook, and sophomore right-handed pitcher Bobby Lasko. As freshmen, Cook and Lasko were forced to pitch more than they expected.

Last season, Lasko went 4-3 in eight starts with a 5.43 ERA, while Cook went 3-4 in seven starts with a 5.77 ERA. McFarland admitted that both pitchers surpassed his expectations with their play last year.

"I had high expectations for both Lasko and Cook coming in, but they really took advantage of the injuries, getting a lot of innings," McFarland said. "They're ahead of the curve."

When the Dukes need to turn to their bullpen this year, they will once again rely on sophomore right-handed closer Travis Risser. Last season Risser led the team with nine saves and a 2.33 ERA.

see PITCHING, page 8



Senior right-handed pitcher Brian Leatherwood led the Dukes with seven wins last year.

THE ROAD TO RISSE

ROTATION

Brian Leatherwood
Jacob Cook
Bobby Lasko
Travis Miller
Greg Nesbitt

RHP
LHP
RHP
RHP
LHP

MIDDLE RELIEF

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David Rich
Geoff Degener
Kurt Houck
Ryan Reid

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LHP
RHP
LHP
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CLOSER

Travis Risser RHP



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ARRIVE EARLY! SEATING IS FIRST COME, FIRST SERVED!

PITCHERS: No ace, no problem for Diamond Dukes' rotation

PITCHERS, from page 7

McFarland emphasized the confidence he has in his team's co-captain.

"We're looking to him to fill the same role as last season," McFarland said. "When he comes in with a save opportunity, we feel like the game's over."

Risser will get help in the bullpen from junior right-handed pitcher Patrick "Trick" Riley, and sophomore right-handed pitcher Clay McKim. Sophomore left-handed pitcher David Rich also will contribute, and has been named the Dukes' game one starter.

While the Dukes' pitching staff is certainly

talented, the one thing they may lack is a true "ace." Leatherwood admitted that the Dukes' rotation doesn't have a true No. 1 starter, but doesn't see this as a weakness.

"We don't have one guy that stands above the rest," Leatherwood said. "On the other hand, we know that any one of our pitchers can come in and contribute, and that'll help us beat some teams early and set the standard."

"Overall though I like this staff," McFarland said. "And from top to bottom it could become the best staff I've had in my time here."

PRIDE: JMU looking for pivotal CAA victory

PRIDE, from page 7

post and we have to keep her off the boards, too."

As far as his team's health is concerned, Brooks said the flu bug and injuries have been conquered for now.

"Aside from the typical nicks, we're about as healthy as we've been all year," Brooks said.

That includes sophomore point guard Andrea

Benvenuto, who missed seven games earlier this season due to a stress fracture in her foot.

"She's progressing nicely," Brooks said. "No pain in the foot. I'd say she's about 95 percent, and the last game she played was her best of the season."

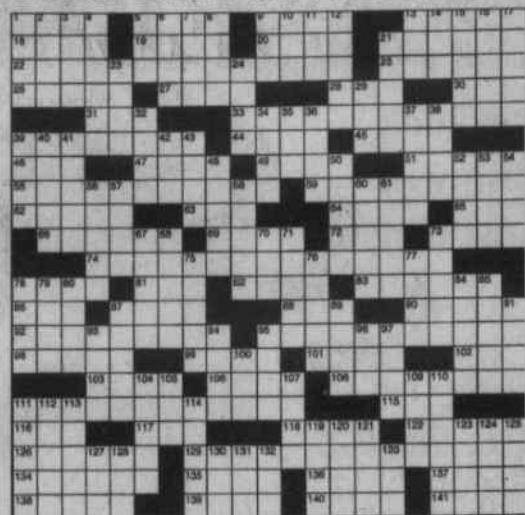
In that game, Benvenuto scored eight points and had six assists. She played 31 minutes.

JMU and Hofstra tip off at 7 p.m.

SUPER CROSSWORD

ACROSS

- 1 Hirt hit
- 5 Kudrow or Hartman
- 9 Lucas character
- 13 Gullible one
- 18 Rueful cry
- 19 Certain Semite
- 20 Imported cheese
- 21 Extragalactic object
- 22 Director picks Kaplan to play Lincoln!
- 25 Author Le Guin
- 26 Prepare to propose
- 27 Valueless
- 28 Hum bug?
- 30 ABA member
- 31 Fix a fight
- 33 "Wheel" ratings plunge!
- 39 More meager
- 44 "Graf -"
- 45 Navigation hazard
- 46 Film, for short
- 47 Castilian custard
- 49 Commoner
- 51 Arm bones
- 55 Carney in new film!
- 59 Vaudeville staple
- 62 Disdain
- 63 Unduly
- 64 "-Ca-Dabra" ('74 song)
- 65 JFK Library architect
- 66 Beethoven symphony
- 69 Velvety plant
- 72 Pro-gun grp.
- 73 Little helper?
- 74 Sandler goes on tour!
- 78 Ever's partner
- 81 Slogger's stat
- 82 Attempt
- 83 Sulky
- 86 Moon crawler
- 87 "-a Song Go..."
- 88 TV's "The - Patrol"
- 90 Prelim
- 92 Plumbing tool
- 95 Affleck wins second car!
- 98 Ho hi
- 99 - Kong
- 101 Roof part
- 102 "Holy cow!"
- 103 "Casablanca" character
- 106 Crucifix
- 108 Agitated
- 111 Hagman plans nuptials!
- 115 Piggy
- 116 Khan opener?
- 117 Castilian cry
- 118 Head set?
- 122 Croc's kin
- 126 Mideastern mall?



- 129 Paquin gets starring role!
- 134 In public
- 135 Row
- 136 General Bradley
- 137 Final
- 138 Alarm button
- 139 Raucous noise
- 140 - Hari
- 141 Actress Merrill

DOWN

- 1 Item in a trunk
- 2 Economist Greenspan
- 3 Ming thing
- 4 Behind a windjammer
- 5 Fall behind
- 6 OPEC member
- 7 "Elephant Boy" star
- 8 Cain's victim
- 9 "Of course!"
- 10 Harem room
- 11 Apply gently
- 12 Petite parasite
- 13 Mongrel
- 14 Owls
- 15 Nothing special
- 16 Mediterranean island
- 17 Brooklyn school
- 21 Suppress
- 23 Skirt feature
- 24 Skiers' mecca
- 29 Wee one
- 32 Present
- 34 Datebook abbr.
- 35 - Aviv
- 36 Charges
- 37 "The March King"
- 38 Fedora fabric
- 39 Mineral springs
- 40 She brought out the beast in men
- 41 Part owner?
- 42 Urban transport
- 43 Absorbed
- 48 Ruth's mother-in-law
- 50 Mont -
- 52 Puppy bites
- 53 Fighter pilots
- 54 "SNL" bit
- 56 Haunted-house sound
- 57 Oklahoma city
- 58 Alex Haley book
- 60 Pianist Chasins
- 61 Bandleader Perez
- 67 Bergonzi or Ponti
- 68 "Waves of grain" color
- 70 Fast flier
- 71 Bright
- 73 Between three
- 75 Bum a ride
- 76 Humble
- 77 Soprano's showcase
- 78 Jessica of "Dark Angel"
- 79 Comic Carter
- 80 Melville novel
- 84 Play ground?
- 85 Great Lake natives
- 87 Po land
- 89 It'll give you a lift
- 91 Change for a five
- 93 Helicopter sound
- 94 Circle dance
- 95 Sikorsky or Stravinsky

- 96 First offender
- 97 Jay's house
- 100 Negative correlative
- 104 It may be tall
- 105 Internet acronym
- 107 Colors
- 109 Demetrius' duds
- 110 Inclined
- 111 Sweat and slave
- 112 Dumbstruck
- 113 Brings down the house
- 114 Thought-provoking
- 119 Particle
- 120 Maffia or Downey
- 121 Petty clash?
- 123 Prepare to fly
- 124 - even keel
- 125 Sita's husband
- 127 Chemical suffix
- 128 PC key
- 130 Long or Peeples
- 131 Unused
- 132 Dadaism founder
- 133 Lingerie item

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BASEBALL/SOFTBALL PREVIEW



2005

Inaugural class bids farewell

First recruiting class in JMU softball history gears up for a final run

STORY BY ASSISTANT SPORTS EDITOR MATTHEW STOSS

In 2002, 12 freshmen came to JMU to form the inaugural recruiting class of a fledgling softball program. Now, four years later, Liz George, Katie Jaworski, Natalie Burd, Ashlee Schenk and Leah Conley are all that remain. This season, the five are set to become the first recruiting class to graduate in JMU softball history.

"I don't want to go there just yet and think about them leaving," JMU softball coach Katie Flynn said. "But it's really exciting to see them as seniors, leading the team out onto the field. I just really want them to enjoy the season and get the most out of their senior year."

Of the remaining five, only four are still on the active roster. Conley, in her final year, has assumed a coaching position on Flynn's staff. Last season, the Langhorne, Pa., native was sidelined due to tendonitis in her knee — an injury that was a result of overuse.

"I'm just happy to have the opportunity to still be with the team," Conley said. "For some reason, I wasn't meant to be on the field, but on the bench helping out and encouraging my teammates."

The other four, however, are quite active on the roster.

George is a pitcher/center fielder who led the Dukes in 2004 in batting (.376), on-base percentage (.425), earned run average (1.85) and wins (15) — stats that were good enough to earn her All-Colonial Athletic Association Second Team honors last season.

Joining George as an All-CAA Second Team selection is Jaworski. The utility player led JMU with 6 home runs and 36 runs batted in, while posting the team's second-highest batting average at .327.

While CAA honors are nice, the seniors have something else in mind for their final run.

"We'd like to play for a championship — and to beat [reigning CAA champ] Hofstra," Jaworski said. "We want to leave it all on the field."

Sharing in the title quest are Burd and Schenk. Burd led the outfield in putouts with 64, while batting .255 last season, and Schenk proved her durability by catching and starting all but one of JMU's 62 games in 2004.

"We've matured a lot," Schenk said. "We've gained so much experience that we know how to handle things in different situations. We're focused on one goal. Today, we're unified."

In the not-so-distant yesterday, there wasn't even a team to be unified on. Flynn, the Dukes' first and only coach, came to JMU in October 2000 from the University of North Carolina-Greensboro to begin work on putting together a softball program from the ground up.

CAA 2005

University of Delaware
Coach: Jim Sherman
2004 Record: 12-11 CAA, 33-24 overall

The Blue Hens look to continue the momentum they gained from last season when they made a surprise run to the CAA championship game. Senior catcher Kelly Buber (.343, 9 HR, 51 RBI) returns, but other than Buber, the Blue Hens lost their team leaders in batting average, home runs, RBIs and stolen bases.

George Mason University
Coach: Bill Brown
2004 Record: 17-6 CAA, 39-19 overall

The Patriots enter the season with a good mix of pitching and hitting. The team was second in the CAA with a .313 batting average and third in the league in pitching with a 4.16 ERA. Returning for the Patriots is senior staff ace Stacey Gant (10-1, 2.72 ERA) and senior first baseman Chris Looze (.340, 17 HR, 81 RBI).

Hofstra University
Coach: Chris Doto
2004 Record: 3-21 CAA, 14-36 overall

Hofstra will be looking to avoid a last-place finish for the second year in a row. Offense will not be a problem, as they hit .291 a year ago, and return junior infielder Ricky Caputo (.361, 8 HR, 41 RBI). However, a major Achilles heel for the Pride will be their pitching, which gave up slightly over eight runs a game and allowed opponents a .331 batting average last season.

Old Dominion University
Coach: Jerry Meyers
2004 Record: 13-11 CAA, 26-28 overall

The Monarchs will have to overcome the loss of starting pitchers Donnie Smith (6-2, 2.29 ERA) and Justin Verlander (7-6, 3.49 ERA), who was drafted second overall in the 2004 Major League Baseball Player Draft. However, the team does get back junior starting pitcher Dana Arrowood (5-4, 4.17 ERA). The team's pitching will have to make up for the team's lack of hitting (.274, 23 HR).

Towson University
Coach: Mike Gottlieb
2004 Record: 6-18 CAA, 17-35 overall

Though the Tigers struggled last season, many of their young starters got much-needed experience. They return almost all of their top players including junior outfielders Adam Heffron (.359, 6 HR) and Casper Wells (.337, 8 HR). Towson also returns its top two pitchers from a year ago in sophomore Joe Peeler (5-3, 5.09 ERA) and junior Chris Rhoades (1-6, 5.43 ERA).

University of North Carolina-Wilmington
Coach: Mark Scalf
2004 Record: 40-23, 17-6 overall

The Seahawks return many of the core players that helped the team win its first CAA championship in school history. Senior starting pitchers Zach Kimball (8-5, 3.26 ERA) and Ronald Hill (12-4, 3.62 ERA) will head the rotation, while sophomore infielder Jonathan Batts (.330, 33 RBI) will anchor an offense that lost two of their best hitters from a year ago in Chip Cawley (.373) and Aaron Smith (.335, 10 HR, 50 RBIs).

Virginia Commonwealth University
Coach: Paul Keyes
2004 Record: 14-10 CAA, 34-24

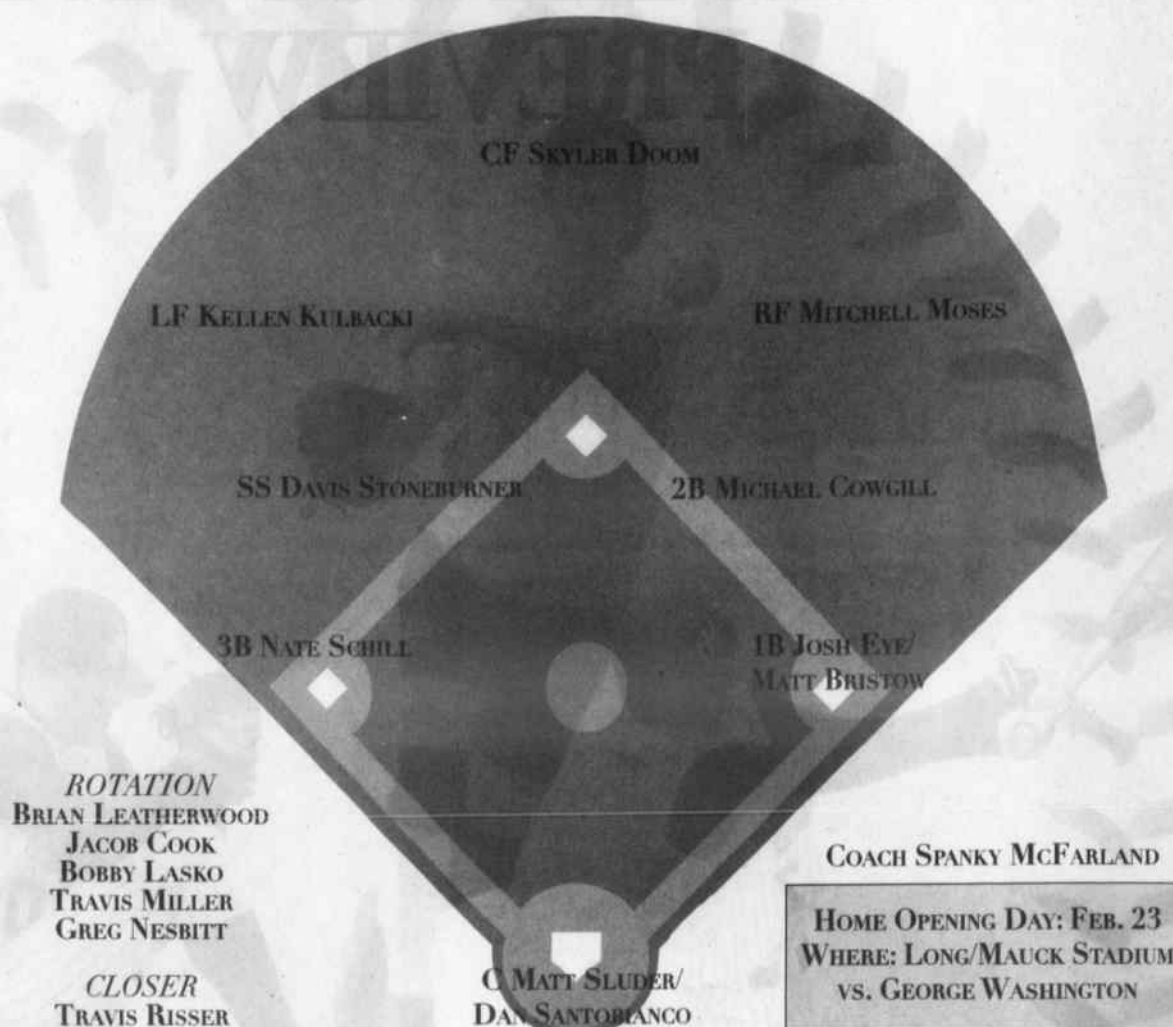
The Rams lost their three best pitchers from last season including Justin Orenduff (5-5, 2.43 ERA), who was selected in the supplemental first round of the 2004 Major League Baseball Draft. This means sophomore starting pitcher Harold Mazingo (7-4, 4.68 ERA) will have to be the staff ace for the upcoming season.

College of William and Mary
Coach: Jim Farr
2004 Record: 14-10 CAA, 37-20

The Tribe return all of their top-five hitters from last season's best hitting CAA team (.326), including senior outfielder Chris Rahl (.389, 20 HR, 70 RBIs) and senior infielder Will Rhymes (.388, 8 HR). However, the team will have to make due with staff ace Bill Bray (4-4, 2.44 ERA), who was drafted 13th overall in the 2004 Major League Baseball Draft.

— Alex Eisenberg

PROJECTED LINEUP



Sluggers in the Infield

2004's leading hitter returns to anchor heart of order from hot corner

BY TOM CIALINO
contributing writer

Nate Schill's name sits atop nearly every list of the Diamond Duke's 2004 stat sheet.

In 50 games last season, the junior third baseman hit .351 and drove in 49 runs, both good for second place on the team behind recently departed outfielder and current Cleveland Indians farmhand Mike Butia. To accompany those numbers, Schill maintained an on-base percentage of .421 and slugged at a .527 clip.

"The thing about Nate is that he is very consistent and he's very clutch," JMU coach Spanky McFarland said. "It's a lot easier to coach when you know what your guys are going to do day in and day out."

Sophomore catcher Dan Santobianco, who will help anchor the middle of the Diamond Dukes' lineup, was equally as complimentary.

"The thing that makes Nate's numbers so good is his ability to make adjustments, not only from at-bat to at-bat but from pitch to pitch," Santobianco said. "If you fool Nate once with a curveball, you're not going to fool him again during that at-bat. He

is, by far, the best player I've ever seen at making adjustments pitch by pitch."

Baseball America named Schill to its preseason All-CAA team. Schill, joins sophomore closer Travis Risser, and said he is honored to be selected but is remaining humble at the same time.

"It's definitely an honor to know that," Schill said. "It's also great to know that I have great teammates to back myself and Travis Risser up. At the same time, it won't have any negative effects; I'm not going to have a big head because of it."

For all of the success Schill had at the plate during his first two years as a Diamond Duke, he also has experienced trouble defensively. As a third baseman last year, he committed 21 errors, the highest total on the team and third highest in the conference.

In order to improve these errors, Schill is taking extra ground balls, and attempting to take a different mental approach.

"As well as getting my arm completely healthy, I've been trying to separate defense from offense," Schill said. "Sometimes, I brought a bad at-bat into the field with me, and we're trying to get rid of things like that this year."

The change in mental philosophy is already starting to produce results.

"We worked on a lot of mental imagery, even some meditation practices," Schill said. "It sounds weird, but it's really visualizing positive effects rather than negative. I have more confidence and am more relaxed because of it."

McFarland believes that his third baseman's error total is misleading.

"Part of those errors, in his defense, is because he gets to a lot more balls than other players do," McFarland said. "He may have a lot of errors, but he also makes a lot of plays that other third basemen don't make."

After coming off of a disappointing 28-26 (8-16 CAA) campaign in which the Diamond Dukes missed the postseason for the first time since the CAA expanded to nine teams in 2001, McFarland will look to his most consistent hitter to guide an inexperienced lineup.

"[Nate] is one of those guys that when the game's on the line, you want the bat in his hands because you know that he's not going to panic," McFarland said. "As a coach, that's very refreshing."

Cowgill works to be "better than the best" in 2005 Diamond Dukes' campaign

BY JESSICA MCKAY
contributing writer

Michael Cowgill epitomizes the expectations of JMU baseball.

"There's a saying we have as a coaching staff. 'BTTB: Better Than The Best,'" assistant coach Jay Sullenger said. "There's nothing we want the players doing that isn't their best."

In 2004, the junior second baseman was better than the best on a number of occasions.

Cowgill finished the 2004 season with a .347 batting average, ranking him No. 14 in the Colonial Athletic Association. But along with wanting to be the best, satisfaction does not come easy.

"Halfway through the season, I was hitting .440," Cowgill said. "So I dropped a hundred points in 20-some odd games. It was disappointing."

Despite his mid-season tailspin, Cowgill still led the team with 74 hits.

"He has always been able to hit," Sullenger said. "And that will not change."

Cowgill offers more than his offensive power. He's a defensive advantage for the Diamond Dukes and earned a .934 fielding percentage last season.

"He was the anchor for our infield defensively," Sullenger said.

Being an anchor involves strength. Cowgill's leadership and hard work led him to being chosen as a 2005 team captain by his teammates.

"Michael is the hardest worker I've encountered in the baseball world," junior third baseman Nate Schill said.

For Cowgill, that hard work translates into durability. In the 2004 season, he started in all but one of JMU's 54 games. But what Cowgill really strives for is the team's success. Despite finish-

ing above .500 last season, the Diamond Dukes struggled against CAA opponents in 2004, finishing the season 8-16.

"Considering where we ended up last year, there's nowhere to go but up," Cowgill said. "Anything is an improvement from last season."

After finishing fourth in the nine-team CAA standings in 2004, Cowgill thinks the Diamond Dukes can be a sleeper team this season.

The preseason-league poll picked the Diamond Dukes to finish sixth in the CAA standings in 2005 and that's just fine with Cowgill.

"I'm glad we're starting out in the middle," Cowgill said. "I think we're going to surprise a lot of teams that suspect us to be down."

In order to surprise other teams, the Diamond Dukes must deal with the loss of their most productive offensive player, Mike Butia, who was offered a chance to play for the major leagues.

"We're going to miss him," Cowgill said. "But we're going to make up for the loss."

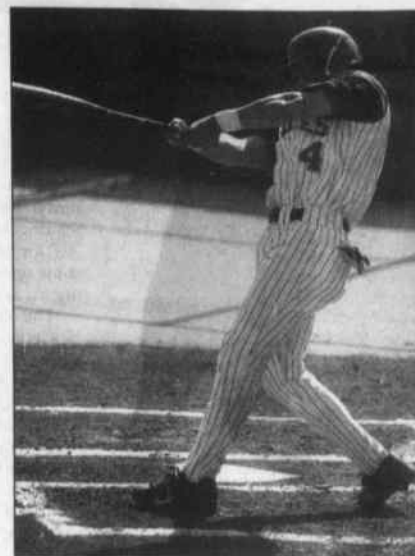
As a start, the coaching staff is asking Cowgill to leadoff this season. Coach Spanky McFarland said that shouldn't bother him because Cowgill already has experience hitting at the top of the batting order.

"Michael hit everywhere last year," McFarland said. "He moved around a lot. He's accepted the role."

Cowgill said his main goal this season is getting hits and getting on base allowing his teammates behind him to drive him in. Despite being dissatisfied with the 2004 season, Cowgill hasn't lost sight of his coaching staff's slogan.

"I could have done better," Cowgill said of last season. "And I should have done better."

Cowgill and the Diamond Dukes take their first step toward being better than the best Feb. 23, at home against George Washington University.



FILE PHOTO

Second baseman Michael Cowgill returns for his junior campaign after a sophomore year in which he hit .347 with a team-leading 74 hits. Cowgill hit 4 home runs and 30 RBIs while slugging .484 and finishing with .403 on-base percentage.

Carrera and George make one-two

PUNCH

BRIANA CARRERA
Avg — .271
RBI — 16
Triples — 4
ERA — 1.92
W-L — 10-13
IP — 171
K's — 126

BY CAROLINE MORRIS
contributing writer

Utility players are hard to come by, but JMU has found two in resident jacks-of-all-trades Briana Carrera and Liz George.

Both players are pitchers and position players — junior Carrera starts at third base when not in the pitching circle, but senior Liz George is more at home in the outfield, patrolling center.

"Most players have their set position," sophomore shortstop Katie George said. "But there are a handful that are utility players."

George started all 62 of JMU's games in 2004, 29 of which came inside the circle where she had success, boasting a team-best 1.85 ERA and 110 strikeouts. She also had a .346 batting average in 2004, which was the highest on the team, while driving in 23 runs and posting a .425 on-base percentage — also tops on the squad.

"I know what to look for," Liz George said. "I know what's going to come and what to expect."

Her play was good enough to earn her an All-Colonial Athletic Association selection.

"I give coach [Sheryl] Shockley a lot of credit, and I give Liz's work ethic a lot of credit," coach Katie Flynn said. "You have a walk-on kid who pitched just a little bit as a freshman, who in her sophomore and junior year has just blossomed tremendously into a Player-of-the-Year-type candidate."

Carrera is no slouch on the diamond herself.

Despite enduring an injury, Carrera bounced back to start 40 games last season — 19 of those she started in the pitching circle, where she had a 1.92 ERA and 126 strikeouts. Carrera also batted .271 and tied for the team-lead in triples with four.

"Briana is a player with a lot of heart and she's very competitive," Katie George said. "I think seeing the way she plays and the intensity that she brings to the game rubs off on everyone."

A game that didn't start in the jack-of-all-trades role, as neither player started their college careers in the circle. George started out as an outfielder, while Carrera was recruited at the last minute to play shortstop.

"We literally saw [Carrera] over the Fourth of July weekend before her freshman year," Flynn said. "We were able to bring her out here in early August, and she turned around and came back on campus about a week later."

The San Diego, Ca., native originally planned to walk-on at San Diego State. "She might have gotten overlooked because of her size and her stature," Flynn said. "She's not really a big girl, but she plays more like she's 5'9" or 5'10" and has a confidence like she's 5'9" or 5'10."

Liz George said, "Briana is fearless. I think sometimes I can become intimidated

see PUNCH, page 12

LIZ GEORGE
Avg — .376
RBI — 23
OB% — .425
ERA — 1.85
W-L — 15-11
IP — 189
K's — 110

CAA 2005

University of Delaware
Coach: Bonnie Jill Ferguson
2004 Record: 9-8 CAA,
29-24-1 overall

Despite the loss of Lauren Street, the Colonial Athletic Association Player of the Year, the Blue Hens will return seven starters this season. All four pitchers who combined to lead the league with a 1.63 earned run average will return to play this spring. In the preseason coaches poll, Delaware was picked to finish third, along with Towson University behind Hofstra University and JMU.

George Mason University
Coach: Joe Verbanic
2004 Record: 8-10 CAA,
28-32 overall

First-year coach Joe Verbanic has four returning players this season. The Patriots will look to senior shortstop Stacy James for leadership as she competes in her final season. James was named to the 2004 All-CAA Second Team. Mason was picked sixth in the coaches' poll.

Hofstra University
Coach: Bill Edwards
2004 Record: 14-4 CAA,
38-51 overall

Hofstra looks to extend their championship run to four in a row. The Pride is a unanimous No. 1 vote in the preseason coaches poll. Hofstra returns seven all-conference performers, who collectively scored a league-high 250 runs. Two of the top returnees are 2004 CAA Rookie of the Year, Ashley Lane, along with 2004 CAA Pitcher of the Year, Callie Osbourne. The Pride will lose three all-conference performers, along with the 2004 league-leader in RBIs.

Towson University
Coach: Lisa Costello
2004 Record: 11-7 CAA,
35-28 overall

Although being selected as No. 3 along with Delaware in the coaches poll, the Tigers return seven starters. Two of these include senior shortstop Katie Mumbauer and senior outfielder Jeanne Bosch, both were selected to the 2004 All-CAA First Team. Sophomore pitcher, Jillian Kiley will also return for the Tigers. Kiley went 10-2 last season, with a 1.44 ERA.

University of North Carolina-Wilmington
Coach: Melissa Jarrell
2004 Record: 5-13 CAA,
19-38 overall

In just their second season, UNC-W will return 11 letter winners and nine starters. Senior outfielder Christina Elmore was selected to the All-CAA Second Team during the team's first season in school history. All three pitchers will also return for the 2005 season.

Drexel University
Coach: Terry DeToro
2004 Record: 3-14 CAA,
15-35-2 overall

Drexel will return senior first baseman Jonnae McCain. McCain is the team's active leader in home runs, runs batted in and extra-base hits. Senior pitcher Elizabeth Fuller returns and is looking to move into the Drexel record books for ERA, strikeouts and innings pitched.

— Megan Mihalko

BY ROSE LAVERY
contributing writer

When JMU softball opens their season Feb. 11 in North Carolina, senior Ashlee Schenk will be waiting to catch the first pitch.

Since the start of JMU's softball program four years ago, Schenk has proven to be a model of reliability and durability behind the plate, sustaining only minor injuries while playing for JMU.

"Ashlee's been a rock for us," JMU coach Katie Flynn said. "I've really been spoiled as her coach, because she's started — I think all but one game for us in the last three years. She does a very good job. She's a very calming influence on our pitchers, that's just her personality."

In addition to being a calming influence, Schenk serves as a vocal team leader.

"She brings a lot to the team because of her maturity back there," Flynn said. "It's a position that I look to for leadership, for vocal leadership, she has to be able to tell her infielders, tell her outfielders where to go and what to do."

"We've been really fortunate — she's done a great job all three years."

In doing that job, Schenk has been relatively injury-free in three seasons. She attributes her health to good luck.

"I believe I've been lucky not to have any major setbacks," Schenk said. "I mean every once in a while I've had nagging injuries, but we have a great training staff to help you

get through that."

Perhaps no one feels Schenk's impact on the team more than a pitcher. Junior left-hander Liz George notices her contributions and presence on the team from the moment she steps onto the field.

"For me, she's my support system because she's the catcher and she grounds me out there," George said. "She's a real team player; she's always willing to give 110 percent every day."

As teammates for the past three years, Schenk and George work together to keep the opposing team's offense at bay.

"She calls my pitches for me. She basically calls every game," George said. "She knows my strengths, she knows my weaknesses. When I'm having a bad day out on the mound,

she knows it without me even having to tell her."

George said Schenk's durability behind the plate can be attributed to both her toughness and having caught almost every game for the Dukes.

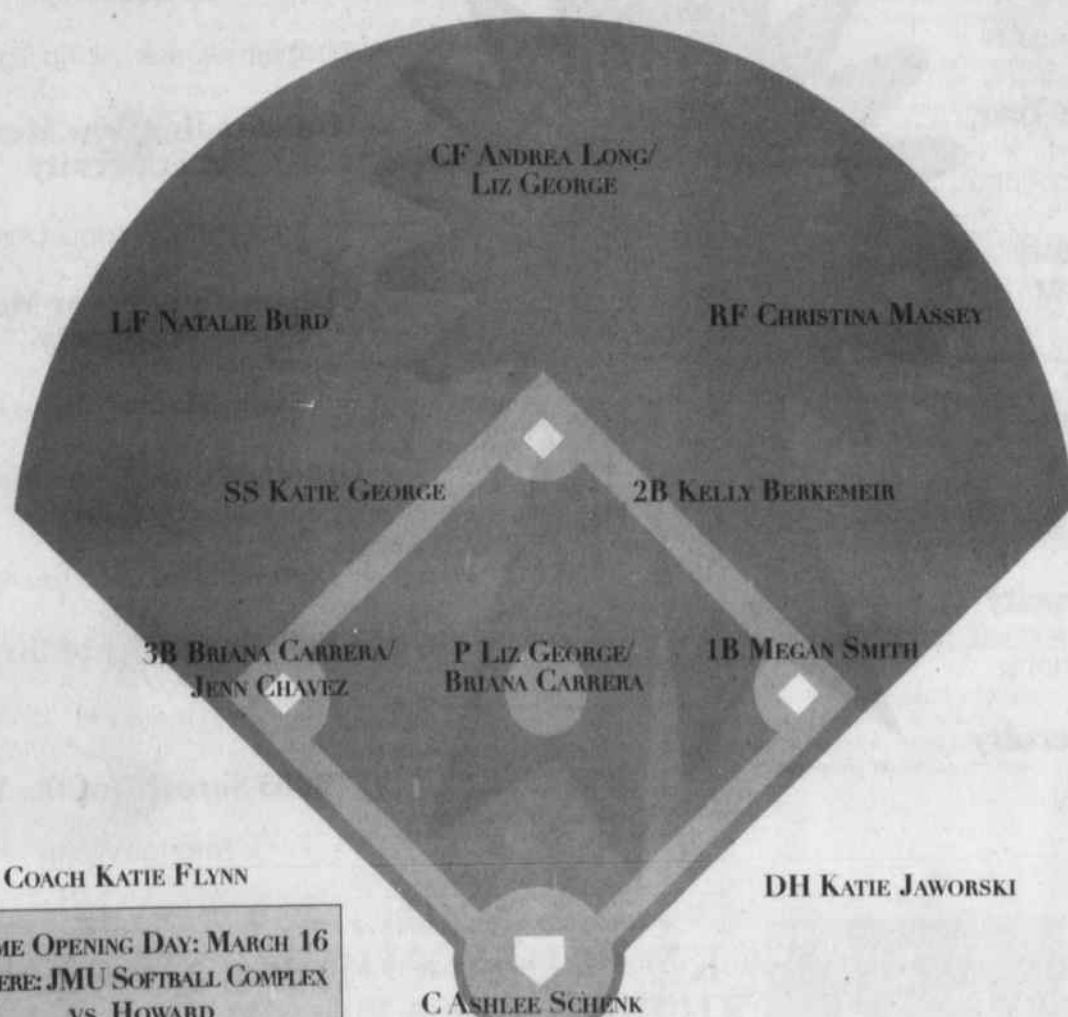
"It is the position she wants to be in, it's something she wants to do," George said. "To her, it's just going out and having fun. She loves the game."

Schenk and the Dukes open their season Feb. 11, shooting for the first conference championship in the JMU softball history.

"We're really focusing as a team this year," Schenk said. "We're picked to be second in the CAA, and I think we're going to have a lot of expectations to fill, but I'm really hoping this team can go all the way."



PROJECTED LINEUP



HOME OPENING DAY: MARCH 16
WHERE: JMU SOFTBALL COMPLEX
VS. HOWARD

BY JENN CHAPMAN
contributing writer

new LOOK

The Diamond Dukes face the daunting task of replacing their entire starting outfield from a year ago. Outfielders Mike Butia, Brandon Bowser and Alan Lindsey left the JMU squad following the 2004 season and left a void not only in the outfield, but the lineup as well.

Butia, who started 52 games last season, was drafted in the sixth round by the Cleveland Indians. He led the team in batting average (.373), RBIs (60), home runs (18), total bases (151), slugging percentage (.782) and walks (31).

In the conference, Butia was second in home runs, third in total bases, fourth in runs batted in and fifth in overall individual batting.

"Losing Butia puts some holes in our line-up and outfield as well," junior second baseman Michael Cowgill said. "This year, different players are going to have to step up and play those spots."

One player who can help fill Butia's spot is junior Mitchell Moses.

"We've got junior Mitchell Moses in right field to replace Butia," JMU coach Spanky McFarland said. "We think his stats will go up with the move as he will be able to focus a little more on his offense collectively."

Moses hit .313 with two home runs and 29 RBIs last season.

Bowser's absence also will be felt. The former starting centerfielder finished the 2004 season ranked No. 1 on the team in stolen bases (19), No. 2 in multiple hit games (20) and No. 6 in batting average (.305). Bowser transferred to the University of New Orleans.

"Bowser was a solid player, but junior Skyler Doom and freshman Kellen Kulbacki are good ballplayers and should be more than adequate," McFarland said.

Doom said despite the drastic turnover, the Diamond Dukes have the potential to field a productive starting outfield.

"This gives us a chance to start new and evolve together into possibly one of the better outfields in the conference," Doom said. "We did lose some good outfielders, but this year's outfield can and will step it up."

"I have no doubt our outfield will succeed this year."

McFarland agreed. He said the outfield might be better than last season's.

"I think our outfield will be better offensively and defensively," McFarland said. "We have more speed and better arms, the production may be more spread out and it may not rely on the long ball as much, but we should be able to more than make up for the personnel changes."



(Above) Junior outfielder Skyler Doom throws toward the infield during pre-season practice. (Below) Junior outfielder Mitchell Moses leads off second base.



In With the New

2004	BA/HR/RBI
Mike Butia	.373 18 60
Alan Lindsey*	.103 0 5
Brandon Bowser	.305 3 22

2005	BA/HR/RBI
Skyler Doom	.187 3 17
Mitchell Moses	.313 2 29
Kellen Kulbacki**	N/A

* Lindsey played in 10 games due to a staph infection

** Kulbacki is a freshman

SENIORS: Final run

SENIORS, from page 9

"Think of nothing. We didn't have a ball, we didn't have a field, a uniform or a player," Flynn said. "Now, we've gone from nothing to something pretty good. A lot of credit goes to [facilities manager] Brad Babcock, because he was the nuts and bolts in physically having a field and an office for the team."

As far as players went, Flynn had to sell recruits on a program that had yet to be a program.

"A lot of players came in on trust and faith in me," Flynn said. "And to JMU without scholarship money to hand out with the belief that we were going to do it right and do it well, and I think — fortunately — we have."

For some, being a part of "nothing" was an enticing selling point.

"One of the main factors I chose JMU was because coach had so much enthusiasm for starting a program," Jaworski said. "When I was recruited, the biggest thing was that I could get in on the ground floor, and I think the five of us have done a great job setting the foundation."

And in a few months, these

"first seniors" will be turning over the reigns of their program.

"Our underclassmen are amazing and I don't know what I would do without them on and off the field," Jaworski said. "This has been an experience I will never forget."

Now four years later, with the foundation in place, JMU has seen its reputation grow from an upstart program to one with legitimate recognition, as the Dukes were picked to finish second in the CAA after only three years of existence.

"The further and further we go, the more people identify us as a team," Burd said. "We recruit more people from all over instead of just the East Coast."

"It's exciting to look back over four years and see what we've accomplished. It's great. We've come so far."

Staring down their final season at the JMU Softball Complex, the seniors have a pact to stay on the field as long as possible after that final game — even if the bus is leaving.

"They are going to have to cut my jersey off my body," George said.

PUNCH: George, Carrera in circle and box for Dukes

PUNCH, from page 11

more easily than she does. That's what I admire about her."

Although Carrera is known for her intensity, she insists that she still has fun.

"I'm serious when it comes to playing, but you can't be too serious all the time," Carrera said.

Carrera even admits to telling Liz George jokes in the circle to loosen her up.

With both players playing multiple positions and their status as two of four co-captains, the pressure can build.

"By pitching, you feel that the games sometimes rest on your shoulders," Liz George said.

Flynn, however, is quick to point out that softball is a team

sport and each player has a hand in the victory or the loss.

"Our philosophy is that our pitchers are trying to keep us in the games," she said. "There are nine other people in the batting order that are responsible for winning the game. I'm not going to downplay the significance of their role, but I'm not going to put the success of the team on their shoulders. I don't believe all that."

Coming off a 30-32 campaign last season, JMU was picked to come in second in the CAA in 2005, but the Dukes have their sights set slightly higher.

"It used to be about stepping stones because we were so young," Carrera said. "But now we want to win it all."

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Outstanding New Member in Sorority

Elizabeth Glaeser, Alpha Sigma Tau

Outstanding New Member in Fraternity

Nick Harris, Pi Kappa Alpha

Outstanding Senior Member – Fraternity

David Billbrough, Theta Chi

Outstanding Senior Member – Sorority

Kelley Moyers, Zeta Tau Alpha

2005 Fraternity of the Year

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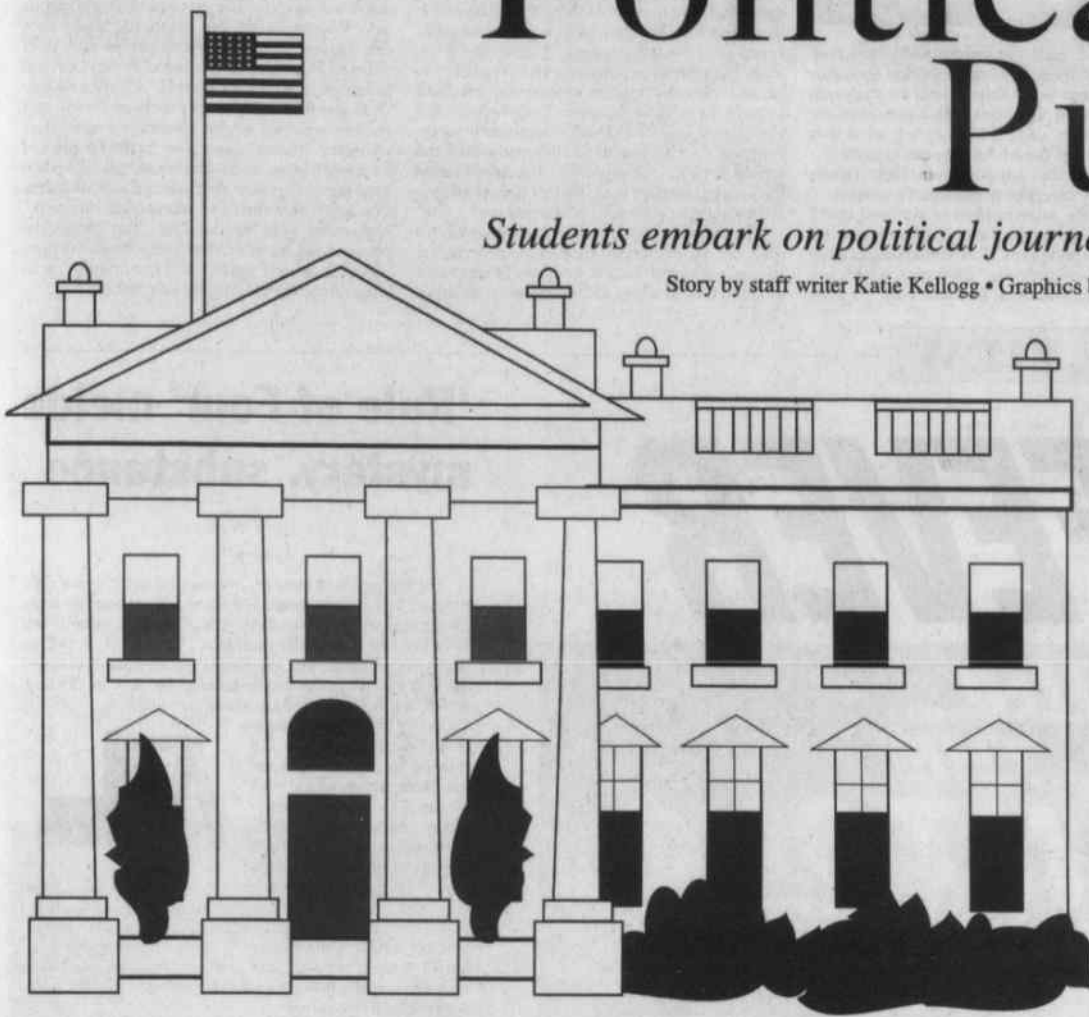


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ΔΓ * ΣK * ΣΣΣ * ZTA

Political Pursuit

Students embark on political journey with semester in D.C.

Story by staff writer Katie Kellogg • Graphics by art director Jenny Chanthapanya



Just a few yards from the President of the United States, senior Ashley Prime stood in awe. Prime traveled to New York to watch as George W. Bush delivered his speech at the Republican National Convention. "It was hard to concentrate on what [the President] was saying because he was only a 25 feet away," Prime said. "I was like, 'I can't believe this is happening.'" For Prime, it was a lifelong dream come true to see a U.S. president speak.

Political conventions, congressional hearings, meetings with heads of state — not exactly a typical day in the life of a JMU student. But for those participating in the Washington Semester program, however, events such as these were all in a day's work.

The Washington Semester allows students to earn six credits working as full-time interns in Washington, D.C., as well as take two additional courses.

Students participating in the fall semester are typically political science majors, and those who choose to take advantage of the program in the spring often are involved in international affairs. However, David Jones, professor in residence of the Washington Semester and assistant professor of political science, said the Washington program could benefit a variety of majors, including English, history, SMAD and anthropology.

Students are responsible for finding their own internships, allowing them to coordinate their internships to their particular career goals. Previous internships have included one at the White House, U.S. Senate, news organizations such as MSNBC and CNN and advocacy groups, like Amnesty International and the Human Rights Campaign.

Senior Kris Russell, a history major, interned for the White House in the Office of the Vice President. "I've always had a strong interest in politics, and I wanted to experience what it would be like working in the government first hand," he explained. Russell was in charge of making sure that when Vice President Dick Cheney went anywhere, everything was set up properly for him and that the Secret Service were in place. He also worked in Legislative Affairs to develop and pass legislation.

Earning real-world experience in politics, as well as building powerful connections, is clearly one of the draws of the program. "Students learn what it is like being a full-time worker in politics," Jones said. "For most students, it is their first introduction into the real world. They get the chance to learn who they are."

Russian native Anna Balishina ('04) said, "When you take classes, it is all theory. But when you do an internship, it is totally different." Today, Balishina is living and working in D.C. at PBN, a public relations firm, utilizing the skills she learned while she was an intern for Virginia Senator George Allen last spring.

Prime also felt that the Washington Semester helped prepare her for life after graduation. "I'm constantly talking to people I met while I was in D.C.," Prime said. "I know I

will have a job when I go back in June or May."

Another draw of the program is the opportunity to live in D.C. Senior political science major Candace Turitto participated in the Washington Semester program this past fall. "I really loved D.C. The first thing I am going to do after graduation is move back to D.C.," Turitto said.

Students live in JMU-owned housing in the Boston University Center in Woodley Park. "Living in the city is a major asset," Jones said. "Many students, when the program is finished, decide that this is what they want to do — live and work in D.C."

While political discussions in the house could get heated at times, students agreed that

despite a few heated debates in the classroom, political affiliation didn't harm their friendships. "I saw the importance of having friends in another party," Prime said. "It is important to meet people with different political beliefs."

Although the program offers students an amazing opportunity, the workload can be intense. Students are expected to work full time Mondays through Thursdays, and take their classes in the evenings and on Fridays. Still, students say the workload was difficult but manageable. "Teachers respected that you had a job and knew that was your first priority," said Russell.

Those students who have participated in the Washington Semester are left with an experience they will never forget. "I have talked to other people who have participated in the program and we have all agreed that DC was the pinnacle of JMU," Turitto said.

Balishina agreed. "Washington semester changed my life," she said. "It made me decide to finish school in Virginia. Otherwise, I probably would have gone back to Russia to complete my studies."



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Same-sex relationships 'cosmically different' for guys, girls

By Keri Lynch
contributing writer

"Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus." Now, I have never read this book and I am not sure how men and women compare to the solar system. However, like most people, I get the point. Men and women are cosmically different. They see the universe from different spectrums — especially in relationships. This does not necessarily mean romantic relationships, but also how they interact in relationships with their friends. It basically comes down to overanalyzing versus oversimplifying. For instance, a word like "fine" could mean a dozen things for a girl while having one meaning for a boy.

Girls tend to talk to their friends about almost anything, typically in over-exaggerating detail. "After I've had a crazy night, I can't wait to tell my friends all about it," sophomore Tina Miller



said. In fact, girls not only want to tell their friends everything that happened, but then they analyze it and want their friends to analyze it as well. "I need that extra reassurance from my friends," Miller said. "I like hearing what they have to say and the advice they can give me."

Girls like this support from their friends because they can often misinterpret scenarios. "I will replay the same incident in my head until I have mentally thought of every explanation or reason for it," sophomore Callan Simmins said. "Even if, I know there isn't one." Most girls, whether or not they admit it, think the same way. "I think

girls get fixed on the smallest detail, and drag it out to all possible conclusions," Simmins said.

If only boys were the same way. They, on the other hand, talk to each other for basic information. It may not be because they don't care, but rather they don't need the extra detail in epic story format. They just want a get-to-the-point synopsis of what happened. "I generally think most guys prefer a summary-style explanation because they don't get as emotionally involved as girls do in most situations," sophomore Jon Greenwood said. This doesn't mean that boys are heartless — they just think differently than the typical female. "[Guys] would just rather get to the bottom line then try to figure out how people are feeling on a subject," Greenwood said.

On the other hand, another reason why boys may not be emotional with each other is the stigma associated with it. Boys aren't supposed to share their feelings and emotions with other

boys. Maybe this is a reason why some guys become so dependent on their girlfriends. "I can talk to my girlfriend about most anything. Girls are just good listeners," sophomore Michael Chupka said. Though boys aren't generally as emotional as girls, they may use their girlfriends as a way to satisfy any emotional needs they may have. "I feel like relationships with your girlfriend touches more personal issues than just hanging out with your friends," Chupka added.

Regardless, discrepancy between men and women appears to be common knowledge, whatever "planet" we come from. People get too caught up in which gender is "wrong," when they need to realize that we are just different. "We know that men and women are different," sophomore Matt Stewart said. "But I think the phrase 'Men are from Mars and women are from Venus' has been drilled into our minds for so long, it has become socially acceptable."

REVIEW

ROCK FEVER



By Alex Sirney
senior writer

Its tunes may not have you burning up the dance floor, but at the very least, British rock band The Zutons will have you grooving in your chair.

The Zutons were nominated for the "Breakout Act of the Year" Brit Award for its first album, "Who Killed... The Zutons." The band blends classic rock, funk and jazz to create a unique sound that fits perfectly with lead singer Dave McCabe's mellow, soulful voice. He's supported by Boyan Chowdhury on lead guitar, Abi Harding on saxophone, Russ Pritchard on bass guitar and Sean Payne on drums and percussion.

Don't get the impression the band creates light, chill-out music, though. It has a punk feel with an un-punk sound — you feel like you're listening to a punk record until you realize the singer isn't yelling at you and no one's told you to turn down the volume yet.

The band's punk feel and classic-rock, jam-band mix would fit in at a party or in a coffee shop. The band isn't overly aggressive, but "You Will You Won't" and "Long Time Coming" are both solid jams that wouldn't have seemed out of place on the radios in the '60s. It might remind you of the Rolling Stones or the Talking Heads if you devote a little thought to it, and "Pressure Point" will

have you thinking of Led Zepplin.

"Havana Gang Brawl" and "Dirty Dancehall" are nearly danceable — especially if you're familiar with the ska music scene. "Zuton Fever" is an addictive piece of work that you won't mind having stuck in your head for a week — which easily will happen.

The music generally is light-hearted and each song has a unique sound that matches the lyrics flawlessly. Songs like "Pressure Point," where you can feel McCabe's tension in the music, and "Not a Lot to Do," which feels like a lazy summer day are exactly what you'd expect them to sound like based on the titles.

The band's lyrics don't delve too deeply into social commentary. Also, there only are two songs that come close to being love songs — "Railroad" and "Confusion." Thankfully, neither become whiny or annoying. In some songs, the lyrics get a little dark, especially in "Nightmare Part II," but overall the band is up-beat in tone and style.

"Not a Lot to Do" and "Moons and Horror Shows" do slow down the pace of the record, but in them the band explores some country and soul sounds that aren't as much fun as the rest of its music but are worth relaxing to.

It may be obvious by now, but The Zutons' style is all over the place. Even with its cacophony of stolen genres, The Zutons have succeeded in creating a unique rock sound.

'Rule of Four' melds mystery, substance

By Erin Weireter
staff writer

For the past few months, my reading habits have been typified by a certain genre — I admit I have been insanely caught up in the action/adventure/thriller novels that have become so popular as of late. I have read every Dan Brown book I can get my hands on and have scanned the aisles of Barnes & Noble looking for similar reading, which, let me assure you, is readily available.

Yet, as much as I enjoy those Dan Brown books, I'm starting to think there's not too much to them. Don't get me wrong — they are absolutely captivating reads, so much so that I've been known to literally drop my other commitments just to finish a chapter or two. What they lack, however, is substance and staying power. I began to crave the substance of a different kind of novel.

You finish Dan Brown novels, think about how amazing the story was, and then you're done. His books move so quickly that remembering any of the plot details seems like a lost cause.

I refuse to believe I'm the only one that feels this way. Almost everyone I know has at least read "The Da Vinci Code" (some even claim it's their favorite book, according to their Facebook profiles), but if you ask one of these people what exactly happened, I'm sure they would be hard pressed to remember details.

Admit it, you know someone like this. I know I do.

So I've gotten antsy. Maybe I've been spoiled — I didn't discover Dan Brown until after many of his books were published, so getting my fill was easy. All I did was read them right after another. But the lack of substance is getting boring.

I found the thrill I was looking for in Ian Caldwell and Dustin Thomason's "The Rule of Four." I picked this book up during one of my many searches through bookstores and was truly impressed. This book has all the same elements of an engaging novel — murder, mystery, deception — yet it takes the time to fully explain itself.

Paul Harris is weeks from graduation at Princeton University, and is on the brink of finishing his thesis. Paul studied the Renaissance text "Hypermetomachia Polophili" long before his years at Princeton. The encyclopedic-type text has its origins in the Florentine Humanist movement. Hidden within the text is a series of riddles and puzzles, which supposedly lead to an ancient crypt filled with treasure. Paul has spent his collegiate years trying to uncover these mysteries, yet just as he seems to be on the cusp of discovery, a shocking murder takes place and sets the story in action.

I finished this book and, for once, when I was done, felt like I had come away with something worthwhile. Regardless of how historically accurate this book may be, what I read stayed with me because the authors were diligent enough to thoroughly explain what was going on. While similar books I've read took liberties to make the plot more interesting, this book stood out with its adherence to historical accuracy.

No, this book is not nearly as fast-paced as a typical Dan Brown book, but trust me when I say it is much more enjoyable. Go ahead, ask me what happened in "The Rule of Four." I guarantee I can tell you.



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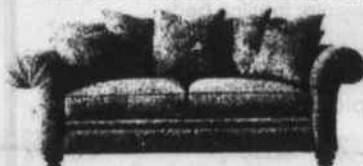
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- Free Cable
- Free Phone
- Free Ethernet